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News

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October 2016 Airline On-Time Performance Equal to September 2016, Slightly Down From October 2015

WASHINGTON – The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 85.5 percent in October 2016, equal to the 85.5 percent mark in September 2016, but slightly down from the 87.0 percent on-time rate in October 2015, according to the *Air Travel Consumer Report* (ATCR) released today.

In addition, the reporting carriers canceled 1.0 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in October 2016, up from both the 0.5 percent cancellation rate posted in October 2015 and the 0.3 percent rate in September 2016.

The consumer report also includes data on tarmac delays, chronically delayed flights, and the causes of flight delays filed with the Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by the reporting carriers. In addition, the consumer report contains a tally of aviation service complaints filed with DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division by consumers regarding a range of issues such as flight problems, baggage, reservation and ticketing, refunds, customer service, and disability. The report also includes statistics on mishandled baggage reports filed by consumers with the reporting carriers, data on oversales, and information about the total number of animals that died, were injured, or were lost during air transport in October, as filed by the air carriers with the Aviation Consumer Protection Division.

Tarmac Delays

In October, airlines reported two tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights and no tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights. All reported extended tarmac delays are being investigated by the Department. Previous investigations of tarmac delays have resulted in enforcement action by the Department.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of October, there was one flight that was chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for three consecutive months. There was one additional regularly scheduled flight that was chronically delayed for two consecutive months. There were no chronically delayed flights

for four consecutive months or more. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is available from BTS.

Causes of Flight Delays

In October, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 14.53 percent of their flights were delayed – 4.64 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.82 percent in September; 4.64 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 4.69 percent in September; 3.96 percent by factors within the airline’s control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.05 percent in September; 0.18 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.43 percent in September; and 0.02 percent for security reasons, equal to 0.02 percent in September. In addition, 0.96 percent of flights were canceled and 0.13 percent were diverted.

Weather is a factor in both the extreme-weather category and the aviation-system category. This includes delays due to the re-routing of flights by DOT’s Federal Aviation Administration in consultation with the carriers involved. Weather is also a factor in delays attributed to late-arriving aircraft, although airlines do not report specific causes in that category.

BTS uses the data collected from airlines to determine the percentage of late flights delayed by weather, which includes those reported in the categories of extreme weather, late-arriving aircraft, and National Aviation System delays. In October, 23.65 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down from both 25.09 percent in October 2015 and from 29.25 percent in September 2016.

Detailed information on flight delays and their causes is available from BTS.

Mishandled Baggage

The U.S. carriers reporting mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.06 reports per 1,000 passengers in October, an improvement over both October 2015’s rate of 2.45 and September 2016’s rate of 2.23.

Incidents Involving Animals

In October, carriers reported four incidents involving the death, injury, or loss of an animal while traveling by air, up from the three reports filed in October 2015, but down from the five reports filed in September 2016. October’s incidents involved the deaths of three animals and injuries to one other animal.

Complaints About Airline Service

In October, the U.S. Department of Transportation received 1,267 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 17.0 percent from the total of 1,527 filed in October 2015 and down 2.8 percent from the 1,303 received in September 2016.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in October against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 79 disability-related complaints in October, down from the 100 complaints received in October 2015, but up from the 61 complaints received in September 2016.

Complaints About Discrimination

In October, the Department received eight complaints alleging discrimination – four complaints regarding race, two complaints regarding national origin, and two complaints regarding religion. This is an increase from both the total of five recorded in October 2015 and the six recorded in September 2016. All complaints alleging discrimination are investigated to determine if there has been a violation(s) of the passenger's civil rights.

Consumers may file air travel civil rights and service complaints on the web at <http://airconsumer.dot.gov/escomplaint/ConsumerForm.cfm> or by voice mail at (202) 366-2220 or by TTY at (202) 366-0511. They may also mail a complaint to the Aviation Consumer Protection Division, U.S. Department of Transportation, C-75, W96-432, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590.

Consumers who want on-time performance data for specific flights should call their airline's reservation number or their travel agent. This information is available on the computerized reservation systems used by these agents. The information is also available on the appropriate carrier's website.

The Air Travel Consumer Report can be found on DOT's website at <http://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/air-travel-consumer-reports>.

Facts

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT December 2016

KEY OCTOBER 2016 ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS

**Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 12 Reporting Carriers and
Tarmac Data Filed by All Carriers**

Overall

85.5 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.2 percent
2. Delta Air Lines – 92.2 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 87.5 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Virgin America – 76.3 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 77.0 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 77.8 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

1. United Airlines flight 1024 from Tampa to Newark, 10/30/16 – delayed 239 minutes on the tarmac at New York JFK after being diverted
2. United Airlines flight 1601 from Orlando to Newark, 10/30/16 – delayed 181 minutes on the tarmac in Richmond, Va. after being diverted

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

* There were no international flights in October with tarmac delays exceeding four hours.

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Spirit Airlines – 2.6 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 2.3 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 1.4 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Delta Air Lines – 0.6 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 0.6 percent

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